

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 636

By Fincher

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Williams Wholesale Supply and the Williams family on the celebration of the company's seventieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to recognize those fine establishments that have made substantial contributions to residential, commercial, and industrial development in the State of Tennessee and have helped build a better way of life for Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, one such company is Williams Wholesale Supply in Cookeville, which has been owned and operated by four generations of Williamses during its seventy-year existence; and

WHEREAS, since April of 1939, the Williams family has been an active part of Cookeville's business community; Frank Williams, who served as the Overton County Circuit Court Clerk, decided to open a hardware store on the Cookeville square and coaxed his son, Robert, out of college to help him start the business; and

WHEREAS, having begun with \$4,000 worth of inventory, Williams Wholesale Supply has grown into a three-store entity that includes multiple warehouses with thousands of feet of shelves that house hardware and electrical and plumbing supplies totaling nearly \$3 million in inventory; and

WHEREAS, Robert Williams, who is now ninety-two years old, says of the store, "I am proud to see it last so long. I have enjoyed the family business"; and

WHEREAS, as the business has expanded, so has the Williams family; Bobby and Roy Williams, the sons of Robert and his wife, Ethel, have been an important part of the family business since they were young boys; and

WHEREAS, following in his father's entrepreneurial footsteps, Roy Williams has been working full-time at the store since graduating from Vanderbilt in the spring of 1980; he says he never thought about working anywhere else, adding, "We worked here in the summers and grew up here all of our lives. We had our tricycle down here and all that"; and

WHEREAS, Roy's brother, Bobby Williams, who graduated from Tennessee Tech University, worked at the store part-time before accepting an official position in 1976, when Williams Wholesale opened up a state-of-the-art lighting showroom; Bobby and Roy worked side-by-side with their father until he handed them the reins; and

WHEREAS, the fourth generation of Williamses stepped up in 2002, when B-Bob, the son of Bobby Williams and his wife, Deborah, began working at the store after graduating from Tennessee Tech University and soon found himself immersed in the family business; and

WHEREAS, Lee Williams, who recently graduated from the University of Tennessee, is the most recent member of the Williams family to join the family business; the son of Roy and Diane Williams, the twenty-four-year-old was not initially planning on joining the family business, but decided he wanted to work with his father; and

WHEREAS, the source of the deeply rooted success that has held Williams Wholesale Supply together for so many generations is an unmatched emphasis on customer service that makes their customers want to return again and again; and

WHEREAS, speaking about this topic, Bobby Williams says, "I'm proud to be a service for this community. Do we make money? Yes. But at the end of the day to have someone say they got something from me twenty years ago and it's still working, that's pretty cool, especially when people can go over the Internet and get what they want. I like business the old way"; and

WHEREAS, the same customer-friendly, down-home service the Williamses offer in Cookeville can also be found at their newer stores in Nashville and Columbia, which opened in 2005 and 2009, respectively; and

WHEREAS, a family that has experienced the satisfaction of finding their true niche and striving for excellence within it, the Williams family is planning on expanding their tradition well into the future; Lee Williams says he wants to see the tradition carried on, expressing a hope that one day his children will oversee the family business; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is proud to specially recognize this company that daily exemplifies its commitment to the noble precepts that support Tennessee's recognition as the "Volunteer State"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate the Williams family and all of the employees of Williams Wholesale Supply upon the celebration of the company's seventieth anniversary, thank them for their commitment to family values and time-honored tradition, and extend to them our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.